

January 19, 2012

Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor
New York City Department of Education
52 Chambers Street
New York, New York 10007

Michael Mulgrew, President
United Federation of Teachers
52 Broadway
New York, New York 10004

Dear Chancellor Walcott and President Mulgrew,

Our students – among the most at-risk in the nation’s largest school district – just lost \$60 million in vital School Improvement Grant funding because you have not come to a solution that benefits our schools and our profession.

As teachers at the 33 “persistently lowest achieving” schools in New York City, we need you to move beyond partisan politics and establish a quality teacher evaluation system as soon as possible in order to restore the funds.

We wish you could see every day how the School Improvement Grants provide greater opportunities for the highest need students to learn. Our schools have been able to afford extra books for lower-level students, much-needed classroom technology, after-school programming that would otherwise be unaffordable in this budget climate, and additional staffing such as master teachers, turnaround teachers, and teaching residents. Now all of this progress is in jeopardy.

The loss of this funding impacts not only how we help students but also how we grow as professionals. We need an evaluation system that gives us meaningful feedback and enables our principals to support us, but that is not mired in bureaucracy. In May 2010, you stood together to pass a law, promising us a better system. We are still waiting for you to deliver.

We need you as our local leaders and representatives to act swiftly in the best interests of our students. We are not interested in blame; we are interested in solutions. Our schools – and the future of our profession – cannot afford to languish in the meantime.

Sincerely,

Teachers from the 33 School Improvement Grant schools

CC:
The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building

Albany, New York 12224

CC:

Dr. John B. King, Jr., Commissioner
New York State Education Department
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12234

CC:

The Honorable Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor of the City of New York
Office of the Mayor
City Hall
New York, New York 10007